

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:301
ANSWERED ON:05.09.2007
ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS TO CHILDREN
Saradgi Shri Iqbal Ahmed

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the estimated number of people living with HIV/Aids in the country is 5.7 million as per the report jointly released recently by World Health Organisation (WHO), UNAIDS and UNICEF;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the National AIDS Control Organisation has started giving free paediatric doses of antiretroviral drugs to children under the National Programme; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to provide treatment to all the HIV and AIDS patients?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 301 FOR 5TH SEPTEMBER,2007

In its report on the Global AIDS epidemic published by UNAIDS in May, 2006, 5.7 million persons were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in India. During 2007, NACO reviewed the estimation method in consultation with national and international experts from UNAIDS, WHO, CDC Atlanta etc. The review was carried out keeping in mind the availability of data based on National Family Health Survey-III, Integrated Biological and Behaviour Survey in High Risk Groups and an expanded sentinel surveillance. Following the expert consultation, NACO estimated that persons living with HIV/AIDS in India range between 2.1 to 3 million. Of them, it is estimated that there are 70,000 children below 15 years of age who are living with the virus. These estimates have been accepted and endorsed by WHO, UNAIDS, World Bank and CDC Atlanta.

In order to ensure universal access of treatment to children, the National Paediatric AIDS Initiative was launched on 30th November 2006. Under this Initiative, free paediatric doses of Anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs and free diagnostics are provided. Special campaigns were launched to screen high risk children so as to detect and treat HIV infected children. Till date, 22,217 new HIV+ children have been detected and 6338 children eligible put on ART at 127 ART centres in 31 states of the country. The paediatric formulations of ARVs for 17,000 children have been made available at these centres. This Initiative also includes developing paediatric ART guidelines, training of pediatricians and counselors, establishment of seven Regional Paediatric ART centres, free CD4 monitoring, free DNA PCR test for children up to 18 months, liquid formulations for babies weighing less than 5 kg, diagnosis and treatment of opportunistic infections and micro-nutrient supplementation.